spoils of northern Italy; Naples was temporarily neutralized; and plans had then been carefully elaborated with experts, among whom was Monge, for the seizure of Malta and the disruption of Turkey by an attack on Egypt.

In all this Talleyrand had been a brilliant and unscrupulous agent. Born of a noble family, his lameness closed other careers and drove him for distinction into the Church, where, under the old regime, the traditions of ecclesiastical feudalism still lingered. In his youth he was the friend of the infamous Mme. du Barry, and owed his early promotion to her influence. When he was treasurer of the French clergy and bishop of Autun, Mirabeau said of him that he would "offer his very soul at a price, and he would do well, for he would exchange dung for gold." During the first years of the Revolution he led the liberal clergy; finally he went to such extremes in secularizing the Church that the Pope excommunicated him. His private life had been scandalous from the first, and he was avowedly a passionate gambler. It was with a sense of relief that he abandoned the Church to become the most unscrupulous statesman and the most adroit diplomatist of his time. It was he who in 1791 laid before the Legislative Assembly the dazzling scheme of national education which afterward was modified and adopted by Napoleon. He forecast the years of radical excess, and had himself sent in 1792 as a secret diplomatic agent to London, where, with occasional visits to Paris, he resided in the main for two years. The English could not endure his duplicity, and finally drove him from their country. The Convention having declared him an emigrant, he sailed for America, and spent some time in the United States, where, being coldly treated in political and social circles, he devoted himself to an analytical study